

**Tammy Beatty
Regional School District 12**

**Education Committee
March 15, 2023**

**HB 6881 An Act Concerning Various Revisions to the Education Statutes
Related to Educator Compensation and Paraeducators**

Good afternoon Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty and members of the Education Committee. My name is Tammy Beatty and I am a resident of Sherman. I work as a paraprofessional in Regional School District 12 at Shepaug Valley Partnership (Transition program). I offer the following testimony in support of **HB 6881 An Act Concerning Various Revisions to the Education Statutes Related to Educator Compensation and Paraeducators**

HB 6881 is an important step in improving the work life and career opportunities of Connecticut's paraeducators. But most of all this bill is an opportunity to begin to treat paraeducators with the respect and dignity we have earned.

I could speak to you all for hours about being a para, but will focus on one aspect.

I have been a para for 22 years and have worked at all levels in schools (K-post secondary) I currently work as a paraprofessional/job coach with students age 18-22. Our transition program prepares student who have graduated from a high school but still receive services until their 22nd birthday. Students receive individualized services and supports, determined by the PPT. This program couldn't exist without para. I work one on one with a student on a daily basis. We focus on all adult living skills.....I am their job coach at their job, I support them at local gym with a fitness program. Without a para, most of our students would not be able to participate. Teacher for the program sets up what these students will do during a PPT meeting. I am not present at that meeting. I just implement what the "team" decides. So teachers have been stretched in their assignments, there for relying on Paras to work more with students. It has long been a frustration to not be a more vital part of the

“team”.

Now is the time for this committee and all the members of the General Assembly to take immediate and meaningful action to raise paraeducator pay, lower our healthcare costs, ensure we have meaningful retirement benefits and give us the tools we need to help students succeed. **I invite you to come visit our program and see what I do each day.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Please support all student learning by prioritizing paraeducators and passing HB 6881.